

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application.

Drawings

A minor change has been made to Fig. 10 so that it is consistent with the description in page 33, paragraph [0115] of the specification.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this drawing change.

Specification

Changes have been made to the specification to place it in better form for U.S. practice.

Substitute Specification

The above-noted specification changes are set forth in the attached Substitute Specification. The Substitute Specification does not contain new matter.

A Comparison Specification showing the matter being added to and deleted from the original specification is also submitted herewith.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve the Substitute Specification.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because of some informalities.

The rejected claims have been amended to overcome this rejection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

(a) Claims 1-6, 17, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iida (USP 6,205,316) in view of Mihalik et al. (USP 3,918,702). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

According to the Examiner, Iida's paper-separator discloses a fusing roller (12), and thus it would have been obvious to replace the fusing roller of Iida with a photosensitive body as taught by Mihalik et al. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Iida discloses, in Figs. 1, 4, and 5, a paper-separating lug 36 pivotally supported by a shaft 81. The lug 36 has a tip 82 (arguably corresponds to the "finger body" of the claimed invention of the present application) adapted to make contact with a surface of a hot roller 12, and a downstream roller 37b (corresponds to the "guide member") that makes contact with a recording paper 15.

As shown in Fig. 4, when the recording paper 15 does not make contact with the downstream roller 37b, the lug 36 is urged to rotate about the shaft 81 in a clockwise direction by a spring 18, such that the tip 82 makes contact with the hot roller 12. As shown in Fig. 5, when the downstream roller 37b makes contact with the recording paper 15, the force on the roller 37b rotates the lug 36 in a counter-clockwise direction against the force of the spring 18, such that the tip 82 moves away from the hot roller 12.

Therefore, in Iida does not disclose or suggest "one or more support components pivotally supporting at least one or more of the paper-separating fingers so as to impart one or more restoring forces thereto urging at least one of the paper-separating fingers to, under the force of its own weight, bring at least one or more of the finger bodies into abutting engagement

with at least one or more photosensitive bodies, so as to, when at least one of the guide member or members is touching at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper, cause at least one of the finger bodies to at least partially overcome one or more restoring forces produced by the weight of at least a portion of at least one of the paper-separating fingers and back off from at least one or more photosensitive bodies,” as required in claim 1. Accordingly, Iida fails to disclose or suggest the “one or more support components” as recited in claim 1.

Mihalik discloses, in Fig. 1, a stripping finger 4 pivotally supported by a shaft 16. The stripping finger 4 has a stripping tip 6 (corresponds to the “finger body”) that makes contact with a surface 2 of a drum, a counter weight 20 that urges the stripping tip 6 towards the surface 2, and a wheel 10 rotatably supported by the finger 4.

When a sheet of paper is not in contact with the wheel 10, the stripping tip 6 is urged towards the surface 2 by the weight of the counter weight 20. When the sheet of paper is in contact with the wheel 10, the wheel 10 would further urge the stripping tip 6 towards the surface 2.

Therefore, in Mihalik, the stripping tip 6 does not abut “the photosensitive body solely by a weight of the finger body when the guide member is free from contact with the sheet of paper” because the stripping tip 6 is urged towards the surface 2 by the counter weight 20, and does not move “away from the photosensitive body when the guide member is in contact with the sheet of paper.” Accordingly, Mihalik fails to disclose or suggest the “one or more support components” as recited in claim 1.

In view of this, even assuming, *arguendo*, that Iida and Mihalik can be combined, Iida and Mihalik taken singly or in combination fail to disclose or suggest the “one or more support components” as recited in claim 1.

Claims 2, 6, 17, and 18, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

Claims 3 and 4 are allowable at least for the similar reasons as stated in the foregoing with regard to claim 1.

Claim 5, dependent on claim 4, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 4.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(b) Claims 10-14, 19, and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iida in view of Mihalik, and further in view of Shigenobu et al. (USP 4,369,719). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 10-14, 19, and 20, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(c) Claims 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iida in view of Mihalik, and further in view of Ogura et al. (USP 4,876,577). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 15 and 16, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

Further, Ogura fails to disclose or suggest the feature recited in claim 16.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 7 and 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants, however, believe that claim 7 is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

Claim 8, dependent on claim 7, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of claims 7 and 8 is earnestly solicited.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (#40,417) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.


Application No.: 10/694,181  
Reply dated May 15, 2006  
to Office Action of February 14, 2006  
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Docket No.: 0951-0129P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: May 15, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: One (1) Replacement Drawing Sheet - Fig. 10  
Substitute Specification - 37 pages  
Comparison Specification - 37 pages

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Attached hereto is one (1) Replacement Drawing Sheet that complies with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.84. The Replacement Drawing Sheet incorporates the following drawing changes:

In Fig. 10, reference numeral --531b-- has been added to indicate the support region.

It is respectfully requested that the Replacement Drawing Sheet be approved and made a part of the record of the above-identified application.